

# ODST Operation SANDTRAP

by RCT DELTA 20

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Summary: After returning from space, HELLFIRE must now journey underground to find a way to the ark, but with Falling now appearing underground, and the infection spreading in Delta, time is running out for everyone.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*ODST OPERATION: SANDTRAP\*\***

**\*\*Part 1\*\***

It has been 5 hours since the destruction of the orbital elevator. The UNSC had been given a small report on what happened on the station and decided that the Falling were a new threat to humanity and assigned several squads of ODSTs to Professor Crow's dig site to recover whatever intelligence they could on the Falling and to find the other prism uncovered at the dig site. Among these squads was HELLFIRE.

"Delta, how are you holding up?" Irish asked.

"Well, considering that I have 9 broken ribs, an alien virus inside me and a killer headache, I feel great!" Delta replied, a smile on his face. His helmet had been destroyed in their escape so he was given a different ODST helmet until his new helmet could be brought to him. Sadly, that wouldn't be for another few weeks.

"Hay, stop complaining." Assrak said from the other side of the hanger bay. He was in a wheelchair as he had seriously damaged his spin. The damage was repairable but he would have to stay off his feet for a few months. "At least you're able to keep fighting. I'll be in this thing for a long while."

"We know, now stop going on about it." A voice said from behind Assrak. Emerging from a briefing room was HELLFIRE's joint second-in-command (next to Delta) KING. Like Irish, King was a veteran sniper

from the Human-Covenant War. He was also a Lieutenant, mostly because he refused to be promoted and transferred to a different squad.

"Yeah Assrak. You'll be back on your feet in no time." Irish said.

"ALL LANDING SQUADS TO YOUR STATIONS. REPEAT, ALL LANDING SQUADS TO YOUR STATION. ETA TO DROPZONE, 5 MINUTES." A voice called over the intercom.

"Well, time to get to work." King said. "Irish, you're riding with me. Delta, I think Gustew and Viper are going with you."

"Right. Whoever gets there first wins." Delta said putting his replacement helmet on.

"You take it easy Delta." Irish said.

"Same to you. Both of you." Delta said as he walked off to his warthog. He walked to the far side of the hanger and spotted his warthog. Gustew and Viper had already taken their seats, Gustew on the gun, Viper in the passenger seat. "Hay guys." Delta called.

"Delta. How are you feeling?" Gustew asked.

"Better but let's not dwell on the past. Right now, we have a job to do." Delta replied. He looked at Viper. "What's up?"

"I just can't get Titan's face out of my head." He said.

"You know that that wasn't your fault." Delta said.

"I know, but if we do find any Falling down there, I'll kill every last one of them."

"Join the club, we've got jackets." Delta said.

"Seriously?" Gustew asked.

"No. I'm joking." Delta replied. "But that isn't a bad idea. Do you remember the plan?"

"Yep." Viper said though Gustew looked puzzled.

"There's a plan? I thought we just went in guns blazing."

"Well, there is that, but we still have to reach the dig site. The plan is that we shall split into 3 convoys. Each convoy will proceed towards the dig site from 3 different directions, though we'll be travelling in the same direction for phase 1. Phase 2 will see us splitting up and regrouping at the dig site, as there have been reports of rebels in the area. Phase 3 is, upon reaching the facility, grabbing any relevant data we can plus the second prism. Phase 4 is to destroy the remaining data."

"They said that it was rebels that attacked the orbital elevator, but..."

"I know Viper. I presume that there are Falling in the area, but we're still in contact with the dig team still stationed there. Neither the less. We have a job to do; I will see that we get it done. My life depends on it"

"ALL TEAMS, BEGIN BOARDING YOUR VEHICLES AND PREPARE FOR LANDING. THE OPERATION WILL BEGIN SHORTLY." Delta climbed into the driver's seat and activated the engine just as Viper picked up his BR and Gustew loaded the gun. Delta looked across the hanger and saw Irish and his team mounting up as well. Irish was the driver, King was in the passenger seat, holding his sniper rifle, and a marine was on the turret. Then the ramp began to lower and the bright sunlight shone into the hanger. "ALL TEAMS LAUNCH!"

Delta, and the rest of the other convoy drivers, planted their feet onto the accelerator and flew out of the hanger bay. Operation: Sandtrap had begun.

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*ODST OPERATION SANDTRAP\*\***

**\*\*Part 2\*\***

Phase 2 was under way and there had been no reports of ambushes, but the radio had been pretty much silent ever since the convoy's split up.

"Convoy 1, Convoy 2, this is Lieutenant Delta of Convoy 3, give me a sit rap, Over." Delta began down his helmet mike.

"Convoy 2, CHRIST FIGHTER reporting in. Nothing to report." Christ Fighter was a Gunnery Sergeant in HELLFIRE. One of the best Covert Ops Agents in HELLFIRE. Convoy 1 failed to report in. Delta feared the worst as it was Irish's convoy. He opened his helmet comm. to Irish but before he could speak, this noise began to bellow down the speaker. It was so bad that Delta nearly flipped the warthog. He listened closely and heard music...and very bad singing. Irish, King and the rest of their convoy were having a sing-a-long.

"IRISH! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?" Delta shouted. There was no reply. "IRRRIIIISSSSHHHHHHHHH!" Delta bellowed down his mike.

"Yeah Delta?" Irish answered.

"We're trying to perform a stealthy insertion and here you are having a sing-a-long. What were you thinking?" Irish was about to apologise when Delta said, "You never have a sing-a-long without me. I have the best voice in HELLFIRE."

"Yeahâ€¦|sorry about that but we couldn't reach you."

"Did you even try?"

"Yes we did." Irish replied but Delta could hear King in the background shouting, "No he didn't!"

"Well, as I was saying, give me a sit rap."

"Since when do you outrank me?"

"It's standard procedure Irish, you know that."

"Fine. Man I hate doing this. Convoy 3, Irish reporting in. Nothing out of the ordinary to report apart from there being way too much sand."

"Well we ARE in a desert Irish!" King shouted.

"Irish, why is King shouting?"

"Oh, we all took our helmets off for the sing-a-long and I'm the only one who has but it back on. I know, bad idea but well, a lot of people died up there and I want these guys to have the time of their lives encase they never return home."

"Well, that's not a bad idea but you should have still contacted me."

"Well, we're about to reach the part of the plan where we meet up. How about we all sing from there?"

"That...is a great idea!" Delta admitted. "But what will we sing?"

"How about, "Is this the way to Amarillo?" Gustew suggested.

"Ha, not a bad idea. Irish did you hear that?"

"Yeah, and I agree. I'll tell everyone else what's happening. Hay, I think I can see you right now. Do you have a dust cloud at the back of you convoy?"

Delta looked to the back of the convoy and saw no dust cloud behind them.

"Negative. We don't have a dust cloud." He then looked to the left of the convoy and there was a group of vehicles, very far away, with the dust cloud that Irish must have been talking about. "Christ Fighter, is that you?"

"Negative. We're running clean. It's someone else." Christ Fighter responded.

"Irish, that cloud isn't ours. We've got company."

"Wait, it's not ours? Then it must be..." Irish was interrupted by a string of gunfire.

"Irish, what's going on! IRISH!"

"Convoy 3 to all other Convoys. We're under attack by rebels. Requesting imitate assistan...Ow, King, take him out."

"Hold on Irish, Convoy 1 is on its way. Convoy Leader to all other Convoy units, divert to Convoy 2's location and lend them a helping hand." Delta said as he turned the warthog towards the dust cloud.

"Guess the intelligence was solid." Viper said, loading his Battle Rifle. "There ARE rebels out here."

"Let's hope that they're the ONLY things out here. Gustew, you ready?"

"Ready when you are."

"On my mark fire everything. MARK!"

### 3. Chapter 3

#### ODST Operation Sandtrap

##### Part 3

Delta pulled up beside Irish's warthog. It was a wreck. The windscreen was full of holes, the engine was on fire, the turret was disabled due to the damage it sustained and the front wheels were punctured.

>"How much longer until we're ready to move?" Delta asked Irish.<br>"Once King returns with some good tires we should be good to go. These things were designed to work until they explode." Irish replied. "Can't believe we lost half a convoy."

>"Don't beat yourself up." Gustew replied. "No-one expected an entire army of rebels out here."<br>"Yeah, we thought it would be a bunch of Falling." Viper added.

>"How many men did you lose?" Delta asked.<br>"30 dead and 25 injured."

>"Leaving 20 of your original convoy to carry on with the mission." Delta finished. "Not the best of news."<br>"What are we going to do about the injured and dead?" Viper asked. "We can't just leave them here."

>"But we don't have enough room to get all of them to the dig-site and we can't go back." Someone shouted from behind. They all turned to see King pushing 2 tyres towards them.<br>"What are your orders Captain?" Delta asked Irish. Irish paused for a moment, weighing up his options.

>"I say that we repair all of the operable warthogs. They will tow those that can't function to the dig site. We'll get the injured and dead onto the warthogs and call for an extraction at the dug site. Those who can will continue with the mission."<br>"I don't think we have time to..." King began before Delta interrupted.

>"You heard the Captain, let's get to work!"<br>"Why do I even bother?" King muttered before pulling the bad wheels off his warthog.

Within half an hour the convoy was on the move. Most of the warthogs were in pretty bad shape but all they had to do was get them to the dig-site. They were in three rows, the more heavily damaged warthogs in the middle. They drove for thirty minutes without any noise, bar the sound of the engines. Seems Irish had learnt his lesson.

>"Delta, come in." Irish called over the radio. Guess not. "Look to your right." Delta turned his head to look at what Irish was talking about. There was a giant crater, it was massive. He was guessing, but it looked like it was 20 miles away and about 15 miles wide. In the centre of this massive hole was the remains of the Orbital Elevator.<br>"I didn't realize we were THIS close to the dig-site."

Delta responded.

>"Yeah, after the repulsers were shutdown the station drifted closer to the dig site." Irish replied back. "We're lucky we disabled it when we did. A second or so later and it would have hit the dig-site or worse. It could have hit New Mombasa."<br>"Oh, we would have got such a big bill if that happened."

>"Yeah, and YOU would be the one paying it." King inserted.<p>

"Hay, why me?" Delta asked.

"Because you were the one who caused it to crash."

"Actually, that was Crow..."

"Yeah, yeah. Sure it was." Everyone burst into laughter. They were like this until reached the dig-site.

After 30 minutes they reached the dig-site. Place was a sunken sand dune with a few rocks and pillars from an ancient Forerunner ruin. The warthogs pulled up and everyone got out and entered their formations. Irish began to brief them on the plan. "We have reports that rebel forces have the remaining scientists hold up somewhere inside."

>"What happened to the other scientists?" one of the Marines asked.<br>"Those that didn't make it to us are dead." King answered.

>"We have to presume that the rebels know we're here." Irish started.<br>"But, considering the force that ambushed us, there can't be that many left." Delta finished.

>"So what's the plan?" Viper asked.<br>"We'll split up into two teams. Team one will consist of the bulk of the force. They will engage the enemy in the lower levels of the ruins. Your job will be to distract the enemy. Engage them and slowly press forward into their lines but be cautious. I don't want to lose anyone on this mission. Viper, you will lead this team."

>Viper saluted Irish, "Thank you for this honour, Sir!"<br>"Team two will consist if me, King, Delta and Christ Fighter. We'll infiltrate the lower levels of the ruins while team one draws the enemy's fire. We'll make sure that the hostages are still in one peace, then flank the enemy and provide you with backup. Once we give the signal, which will be an explosion behind the rebels, I want all of you to break cover and charge the enemy. We'll have them pinned down with suppressive fire so they can't retaliate. We'll force the remaining rebels to surrender then call for an extraction for our dead and wounded. That clear?"

>Everyone shouted in unison, "SIR, YES SIR!"<p>

Irish, King, Christ Fighter and Delta crawled through a hole that they had found on the other side of the ruins and worked there way into the structure. After what felt like five minutes of commando crawling, they entered the ruin. They had arrived in a large empty part of the structure. There were four passage ways leading out of the room.

"Great, now what?" Christ Fighter asked.

"Think we should split up?" King suggested.

"What else can we do?" Delta commented. Suddenly gunfire sounded from three of the passage ways.

"Looks like team one has engaged the enemy." King started.

"Meaning that if we take these three passageways we should find the hostages." Irish finished. "Delta and Christ Fighter take the two on the right. King, your with me. We'll take the one that seems to be going up. See if we can't find somewhere to snipe from."

"Understood." Delta and Christ Fighter said in unison as the stormed off down their respected passageways.

#### 4. Chapter 4

**\*\*ODST OP. Sandtrap\*\***

**\*\*Part 4\*\***

Delta ran along his tunnel, getting closer and closer to the origin of the gunfire. He emerged out of the dark tunnel into a dimly lit chamber. It was a massive room like the room that his team had emerged a few moments ago. There were strange runes going up the walls and columns, just like everywhere else in the ruin. He was behind the rebels who were firing down a large passageway towards a group of Marines in cover, who were returning fire. So far none of the rebels had been hit, he couldn't see if they'd hit any of his men. He looked around and spotted Christ Fighter by the scientists, uniting them with Irish and King on an upper level, rifles primed. Delta snuck over to Christ Fighter to give him a hand.

"How much longer do you think Viper's unit can keep them distracted?" Delta asked as he cut away at a hostage's restraints.

"Long enough. We're nearly done here." Christ Fighter said and pointed up to Irish and King. "Besides, if need be, they'll take care of them."

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

The gunfire continued as they cut away at the remained of the restraints. Soon the scientists were free and Christ Fighter motioned them down one of the tunnels while Delta crawled closer towards the rebels, who were oblivious to his approach. He took cover behind a fallen pillar and raised his BR. "This is Delta. In position."

"This is Christ Fighter. Hostages are headin' out. Returning now."

"This is Irish. King an I will provide you with sniper support Delta as you move on up and detonate your bomb, signaling everyone else to charge. On three..."

Delta waited, tensed up and ready to charge. The rebels still kept firing down the hallway, totally oblivious of his presence.

"GO!" Irish shouted as a barrage of sniper rounds flew into the enemy lines, felling a number of them. The rest flung themselves behind cover and fired a blind volley to where Irish and King were. Delta looked up at their position as they'd stopped firing. He didn't know

what they were doing. The barrage from the rebels ended and someone poked his head out from behind cover. Suddenly his head exploded into many bloody little bits. Then it hit him. They'd stopped to switch to explosive rounds. The rebels quickly retreated back into cover and threw up a barrage of bullets towards both Irish and Viper's team. An act of desperation.

"Delta! What are you doing? It's time for the big boom!" King shouted in-between firing a fresh shot at the rebels. Delta reached into his pack and withdrew a sachel charge. He broke from cover, armed the bomb and bolted for the rebels. He made it to them without any problems, threw the bomb into the middle of them, turned and dived out of the way as the bomb detonated. He heard the battle cry of Viper's team as they charged up the passageway. The rebels who survived the blast surrendered and were rounded up. Christ Fighter ran over to Delta and help him off the ground.

"Next time, wait until I'm back. I've been out of action for sooo long I need to sharpen my skills." Christ Fighter told him. They regrouped with Irish where he congadulated everyone on a job well done.

"Come on. Let's get back topside. No doubt General Grand will want to debrief us personally." Irish said as he lead them all back to the surface.

Delta walked out of the general's make-shift command hub. It was the back of an elephant covered by a tent. He walked over to Christ Fighter, who was waiting, and told him the the general wanted to see him next.

"Bought time." he said as he strode in. Delta walked off into the base that had been set a few hours ago. It turns out that this group of rebels were the key to finding the rest of the rebels on Earth. He walked into the mess tent, grabbed his slop and went and sat with Irish, King, Gustew and Viper.

"Hay, Andy. There you are." Gustew called to him. "You sure took your time."

"Yeah, sorry guys. The general wanted to ask me a few questions not tied to the mission."

"You mean about the Falling?" Irish guessed.

"Yeah. I told him about the prism and he's arranged for a marine company to go down to the lower levels of the ruins and retrieve it."

"Wait, so we're not going to get it ourselves?" Christ Fighter asked as he walked into the mess. "Shame, really wanted to fight a Falling."

"I'm glad we don't have to." Delta replied, sitting down and removing his helmet. "We lost too many good men to those things."

"I thought you were being debriefed?" Irish asked.

"Yeah. I'm all done. All I had to do was confirm a few things then they let me go. You lot had to talk about what happened on the



Orbital Elevator."

"Still, do you think that a company of marines will be able to go toe to toe with Falling if a bunch of ODS'Ts couldn't?" Viper asked.

"These marines should." Someone shouted from the entrance to the mess tent. Everyone turned to see who it was. There stood an ODS'T in light blue camo without a helmet, her brown hair swaying around her nape.

"Kate! What are you doing here?" Delta asked as he walked over to her. They embraced and everyone else in the tent let out an "Awe". Delta turned and gave them a look, shutting them up instantly.

"I'm here because that company of marines you were talking about was chosen by me a several other ONI officials. During the war, these men were used for extreme extractions of ONI personnel or artifacts. They have all been recommended for ODS'T training. They should be able to handle anything down there." Kate replied as they walked back to the table.

"Yeah, but can they handle Falling?" Delta asked. "We went up with three other superb ODS'T squads. You know how that ended."

"But we haven't received any sightings of any Falling and we're still in contact with the scientists down there..."

"Wait, there's still scientists down there?" Irish asked.

"Yes. They were down there when the rebels attacked and sealed themselves in."

"So when do your boys go in?" King asked.

"They should be there by now." Kate said standing up. "If you're all done here you can accompany me to the command tent and listen in on their progress."

Delta walked into the command tent and followed Kate to a young man in tan uniform at a computer. The command tent was a tent covered elephant close to where the general had debriefed them. He looked at the screen and saw a window that took up most of the screen, showing a view from a helmet cam. To the right of that were different numbers, obviously other helmet cams. Kate was leaning over the young man with a headset on her head. She began to bark orders down the microphone and the screen began to shift between the different head cams. She passed him a separate headset and continued to talk to the marines. He put it on his head and was bombarded with marines talking. Kate quickly silenced them and told them there was someone here to speak with them.

"Uh, hi marines. I am Lt. Delta of HELLFIRE. Just wanted to give you some words of advice. It's most likely that the Prism hasn't been activated but in case it has been, be cautious of the scientists as they've been exposed to it's spores the longest. Once you find the Prism exac to the surface as soon as possible."

"Thanks for the info Lieutenant, but what advice do you have on engaging Falling?" A marine asked through his headset.

"If you have to engage them, aim for the head. Quickest way to take them down, or at least it'll down them while you run past. If you can avoid an engagement, I advise you to do so. Those things will rip you to shreds given the ch..."

"We've got movement Sargent Major!" A marine shouted. Delta and Kate looked at the screen corresponding to the marines head cam. It showed a man in a white lab coat covered in dust standing by an archway ahead of the marines.

"Corporal, check it out." The Sargent ordered. Delta and Kate continued to watch through the Corporal's head cam as he approached the scientist. He repeatedly called out to the scientist but his head remained lowered.

"Sarg, he's covered in blood." The Corporal reported. Feeling uneasy Delta ordered the Corporal to fall back to the main group. "But what about the scientist?" the Corporal asked.

"He's not responding and he's covered in blood. He's turning."

"Turning? Turning into what?" The Sargent shouted.

"CONTACT!" A marine shouted followed by gunshots. The head cams started to spin and the different rifle flashed. One by one the head cams disconnected, followed by screams of pain. Kate didn't take long to demand a status report from the marines, though Delta knew exactly what had happened. He dropped his headset, turned, picked up his helmet and marched out of the command tent, followed closely by Kate.

"Where are you going?" she demanded as he popped his helmet on.

"To grab my gun."

## 5. Chapter 5

ODST Op. SANDTRAP

### Part 5

Delta was the first to walk into the ruin, BR raised. He was closely followed by Irish, King, Christ Fighter, Viper, Gustew and some of the other members of HELLFIRE who were part of the other convoys, including Lazar Gunner and the new Hunter, Marco was transferred out of HELLFIRE to become an ODSF training instructor. There were other marines from the convoys who decided to join them but they were here to extract any surviving marines from the retrieval squad.

"Guess you get your chance to fight some Falling Christ Fighter." Delta said to break the silence.

"Yeah, can't wait to see how good they are." Christ Fighter responded. Delta rolled his eyes. "Delta, what happened to your helmet?" Christ Fighter asked upon realizing that he was wearing a Recon helmet instead of his ODSF helmet.

"Oh right. This is Kate's helmet. Because of what happened on the Orbital Elevator and what happened to the Recovery squad she wants to be able to see what's going on down here so she gave me her helmet which has a helmet cam connected to the command tent. It's a bit tight but its way more advanced than any of your helmets."

"I beg to differ." King commented. "Hellfire receives the best helmet Operating System that the UNSC currently own."

"This helmet has the best Operating System that ONI currently own, meaning that it's a better O.S than that the UNSC currently own."

"Right, can it both of you." Irish interrupted. "We're here looking for missing personnel, not to discuss the latest issue of UNSC's officers in swimsuits or whatever it is that you ladies read."

"Have you been going through my stuff?" Hunter asked. Everyone stopped and stared at him. "What? I'm not the only one who reads it."

"Shawn, shut it." Lazar told him before Delta walked over to him.

"My girlfriend's in that." Delta remarked.

"Oh, she's the page 3..." Hunter began before Irish moved between them to prevent Delta from punching him.

"Steady Delta, he's only messing you around."

"You'd better watch your mouth Corporal. Someone might just decide to sow it shu..."

"DELTA!" Irish shouted, trying to snap him out of his mood. He began to drag him away towards the front of the group and switched to his helmet com. "What's wrong with you?"

"I don't know. Normally I can take banter like that, heck I dish most of it out." Delta responded having snapped out of his mood. "I just feel very...protective."

Knowing what he was getting at Irish asked "When did you start feeling these protective urges?"

"When King and I were arguing about the Operating Systems."

"Then there defiantly are Falling down here. Great. You'll stay up front with me. We'll need your ability to sense these things and..."

"And to make sure that I don't murder anyone, got it." Delta finished.

"I wasn't going to say that." Irish responded, saddened that Delta thought he didn't trust him. "With you up front, we have someone who knows a Fallings' weak points, meaning we can prevent more casualties. That's why I'm up here as well."

"Sure, whatever." and with that Delta was silent. They continued to

walk in formation for a minute with no sign of any Falling or the retrieval squad, but the amount of blood on the ground and walls meant that they were getting close.

"I don't see how you could trust me to fight with you..." Delta finally said before Irish interrupted him.

"Delta, you're my best friend and an excellent wingman. You haven't let me down before. You won't now."

"You didn't let me finish. How can you trust me when I don't trust myself?"

Irish stopped dead and turned to Delta. "What do you mean?"

"I can feel a high concentration of Spores which only gets bigger the further in these ruins we go. I don't know how long I have until the transformation goes too far. I could turn against you all at any moment now. I don't trust my body to hold on until we can get out of here."

I

Irish walked over to him and put a hand on his shoulder. "Everything will be fine Delta. We'll get through this."

"If I turn while we're down here I want you to promise me that you'll put a bullet between my eyes."

"I'm not going to promise tha..."

"Just say it. Even if you don't mean it. At least then I can go on without any fears that I will turn into what became of ALPHA 06."

There was a short pause before Irish responded. "I promise." He removed his hand from Delta's shoulder and they proceeded to carry on walking, though Irish began to lag behind until King appeared next to him.

"What did Delta mean when he said what became of ALPHA 06?"

Irish stared at him in amazement. "How did you hear that? We were on a private channel?"

"Kate could still hear it back at the Command tent and she broadcast the discussion to the rest of us."

"Wait, if she heard us say that then..." They both looked over at Delta who had removed his helmet and had it slung over his shoulder. As they got closer to him they could hear the faint voice of a woman.

"Women." Delta said as he turned to everyone else. "You gotta wonder how something so small could be so loud." Everyone began to laugh, all except Irish who was staring at Delta. "What? I got something in my teeth? Delta joked.

Irish didn't respond. He moved a hand up to his helmet and pulled it off. He looked like he'd seen a ghost. "Delta, you face..." Before

Irish could finish Delta had grabbed his helmet and began to look at his reflection in the visor. As soon as he looked into the built-in helmet cam Kate stopped ranting over the com channel. Delta's skin had begun to turn a dusty brown colour and his eyes were blood shot. "I'm turning. I've got the guts of an hour before I fully lose myself to the transformation." Delta said with a grim look on his face.

"Delta, I'm so so..."

"Don't say it Irish." Delta interrupted before he put on his helmet. "The more time we waste here, the less I have to complete the mission." Delta began to walk off down the passageway with everyone soon following him.

It was another minute before anyone said anything.

"So why am I not allowed to talk to Delta? He looks mighty depressed." Hunter asked.

"Because you'd only make things worse." Christ Fighter responded.

"But why? With Assrak gone it's up to me to deliver the comedic humour to the group."

"Still, you're not allowed near him." Gustew added.

"But why?" Hunter moaned.

"Because he might only have a hour left before he transforms into one of them." Irish said over the com. channel. "Meaning that he'll have 59 minutes before he shoots himself." The squad returned to silence.

"Since when was Delta suicidal?" Hunter finally said after a minute. Before someone could turn round and smack him, Delta called over the radio.

"Look lively gentlemen. Just found my first marine. Confirmed K.I.A."

"I've got another over here." King responded.

"And here." Irish finished. As soon as Irish was done more and more corpses were uncovered. For the next few minutes they began to search through the bodies to see if there were any survivors. Some were easier to declare dead than others, as they were missing some key parts...like a head. Others had large gashes across their torsos meaning that if they had survived the initial assault, they would have bleed to death.

"Doesn't seem anyone was left alive." Viper commented as another corpse was loaded onto a makeshift trolley. "Seems that they're more brutal than the ones we encountered on the Elevator."

"Yeah, but why?" Irish responded. Before anyone could answer him, one of the marines shouted, "WE'VE GOT A SURVIVOR OVER HERE!" Everyone stopped what they were doing and went over to see if they could help. Delta was one of the first ones there. The marine was lying with his

back against the wall, his legs mangled beyond redemption. The rest of his body looked like it could be saved. The marine looked like he'd been to hell and back; he had numerous gashes across his face and torso of various sizes though they didn't look life threatening.

"You're lucky to be alive Private." The medic who was examining him commented.

"If this is what it feels like to be lucky, I'd hate to see the unlucky ones." He said between coughing up spurts of blood.

"Easy there. Just because you're alive now doesn't mean that you won't die later on." Another medic commented.

"What do you mean?" Delta asked.

"We're not sure how bad his internal bleeding is." One of the medics responded. "We need to be careful as we transport him to the medical centre."

"Don't worry about me." The marine gurgled. "Save the others."

"Everyone else is already dead."

"No, not here. Further in. We stayed behind to give them a chance to run. They could still be alive..."

"Wait, there might be more further in?" Delta asked.

"Yeah, they were told to retrieve the prism while we held the Falling off. Considering the state I'm in, I think we did a pretty good job."

"Too bad you won't be alive long enough to find them." A grim voice bellowed. Everyone turned to see where the voice had originated from. Pushing its way up out of the pile of corpses was a figure that looked all too familiar to Irish and Delta. There stood one of the scientists who had turned into a Falling. Before anyone could bring their guns to bear on this new enemy, and with inhuman speed, the Falling had dashed off the pile of corpses straight towards the injured marine and rammed his hand into his chest. With an excruciating cry, and knowing the futility of his actions, grabbed the foreign object that had invaded his abdomen. With a squeeze and a pull the Falling retracted his arm, which was drenched in blood, and screamed with joy. In mid scream the marine closed his eyes and began his eternal sleep. Outraged that he hadn't detected him sooner, Delta drew his blade and severed the crimson arm. The falling, still screaming, staggered back in pain. By now everyone had the weapons trained on it. Knowing that it wouldn't be able to take another life without losing its own, the monster retreated down the passage way with the same inhuman speed that had claimed the marine's life.

"You're not getting away!" Delta screamed as he gave chase. Despite the speed that the creature was racing off at, Delta was still able to keep up. After a few seconds of running, the Falling banked right and dropped down into a dark pit. Ignoring what everyone else was saying Delta jumped in after it. He'd failed to judge the size of the

drop. It was about 10 meters deep, enough to cause him some damage. While in mid-air he angled himself so that he'd land on the Falling, breaking his fall. With a thud he impacted with the ground and the Falling. To prevent the Falling from getting up, Delta held his boot over its head to keep it down. With sword in hand he prepared to strike.

"Strike me down if you wish." It responded. "But the Fury will avenge the deaths of me and of my brothers in space."

"Then he'll be my next victim." And with that another life was ended. Delta sheaved his blade just as everyone reached the top of the pit.

"DELTA! Are you all right?" Irish asked.

"I'm fine."

"Where's the Falling?"

"Dead."

"Hold on, we'll get you out if there." Irish beckoned.

"Don't worry about me, go and save those Marines." Delta called.

"I can't just leave you down there!"

"There seems to be a passage way down here. I'll follow that and see where it goes."

"But Delta..."

"Are mission is to find the Prism and anyone left alive down here. You trying to get me out will just be wasting time, which neither those marine nor I have much of. I'll be fine on my own. You know I'm more than a match for any Falling."

Knowing that Delta was right, Irish reluctantly gave in. "Fine. We'll find the survivors then meet up with you at the prism."

"Count on it." Delta replied as he walked down the passage way, BR raised and ready for any would be attackers to make their moves.

End  
file.